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ABSTRACT

This paper idsucsses the J. Lloyd Trump (NAASP) model of differentiated staffing and compares it with that of Dwight Allen (Stanford University.) The general rewards and pitfalls of differentiated staffing are discussed, and the author concludes that although these two models have served as the basis for all significant differentiated staffing proposals in the sixties, it is too soon for assessment of their ultimate success. (Author/JF)

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DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING - ITS REWARDS AND PITFALLS*

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Specialization has become one of the most significant words of the Space Age. Most of the extraordinary achievements in our era have resulted from a systematic utilization of talented people. There is scarcely a gain worth mentioning in science, medicine, business or management, and indeed professional education, that does not reflect an enlightened application of staff utilization.

This has not always been so. The past is not very remote when most great discoveries and ideas were developed by creative minds working alone, often in cloistered places and frequently with little public recognition. Theirs was a solitary specialization. Our age has seen the dawning of a team approach to specialization, in which men and women of differing talents and training combine their skills to provide an increasingly more efficient attack on the limits of knowledge.

This concept of specialization within a team has led to the development of many of today's most promising educational innovations, among them team teaching and differentiated staffing. The role of the teacher is central to the progress of modern education. Much contemporary research has focused on the problem of providing a more efficient format for teaching than that experienced by the jack-of-all-trades teacher of former times. The present concept of the teaching role dates back to the 19th Century when the teacher typically had a limited education and was expected to function in all or several fields of knowledge. All teachers were expected to be fundamentally alike. They were interchangeable. They were all expected to have the same basic skills and the same inherent limitations. Promotions in the field were and still are to a great extent away from the students. If a teacher shows unusual promise, he may become a department chairman or a counselor

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or an administrator. In all of these cases he meets fewer students and, as he advances, he moves further away from the thing that he does best. Perhaps this is a good example of the "Peter Principle" in operation. This, unfortunately, should not be, but will continue to be so until the concepts of staff utilization, staff differentiation and true specialization find a wide application in our schools.

In a recent article of particular excellence, James Olivero quotes an insightful definition of differentiated staffing as proposed by Don Barbee. "Differentiated staffing is a concept of organization that seeks to make better use of educational personnel. Teachers and other educators assume different responsibilities based on carefully prepared definitions of the many teaching functions. The differential assignment of educational personnel goes beyond traditional staff allocations based on common subject matter distinctions and grade level arrangements and seeks new ways of analyzing essential teaching tasks and creative means of implementing new educational roles." As early as 1959, Dr. J. Lloyd Trump recommended that secondary schools reorganize their teaching staffs along differentiated lines to include professional teachers, instructional assistants, clerks, various kinds of aides, community consultants and staff specialists. Departing somewhat from the Trump approach, Dr. Dwight Allen of Stanford University proposed a model of differentiated staffing in 1964 that projected four levels of professional teachers and three levels of non-professionals. These two models by Trump and Allen have served as the basis for all significant differentiated staffing proposals in the decade of the Sixties.

The Trump plan supports the concept that there must be differentiation in school administration, in the teaching staff and among the paraprofessional assistants. It presumes several levels of function and competence but the organization on each level is more horizontal than vertical. The administrative staff includes a Principal who is defined as an instructional leader; an Assistant Principal, or several if the school is large, who has as his primary responsibility curriculum and instructional leadership; a Building Administrator who is responsible for the school plant, the

cafeteria, the transportation system, and various administrative details; an External Relations Director whose responsibility is to develop the school's financial needs for the central office, governmental agencies and other groups; a Personnel Administrator who has responsibility for supervising attendance, discipline, guidance, and liaison with community and public agencies; and an Activities Director who is responsible for faculty social events and student extra-curricular activities. The Trump design envisions a departmental or inter-disciplinary teaching team which builds on the varying talents and individual differences that exist among teachers. The plan suggests a team teaching approach with differentiated functions among teachers in somewhat the way the school hopes to provide for individual differences among the pupils. This concept, however, does not imply a hierarchy of teachers; it proposes a team of peers working together, utilizing their different talents for the common good of the students. It means that the school deliberately employs a staff with divergent training, competencies and interests. It means that the school capitalizes on the differences among teachers rather than attempt to push them into traditional molds. These professional teachers, in turn, work with three kinds of paraprofessional assistants: Instructional Assistants with the equivalent of two years of college or similar training who supervise independent study areas, help prepare materials and evaluate student progress; Clerical Assistants who are hired on the basis of their skills in typing, duplicating, record keeping and the like; and General Aides, required to have no specific training, who handle general kinds of supervision and assist in miscellaneous ways.

The Trump plan sees the teacher in the role of "facilitator of learning" and teacher-advisor. It is basically a non-hierarchical design. The Allen plan, on the contrary, is basically hierarchical in its approach. This design has been systematically developed in the Temple City Unified School District in California. Professional teachers are organized on four levels; Associate Teachers, interns or "novices" who have a formal schedule but few responsibilities; Staff Teachers who have a regular teaching load and are aided by paraprofessionals; Senior Teachers who are defined as "learning

engineers" and are expert in particular subjects or skill areas; and the Master Teacher who is the resident scholar and research expert. Teachers higher in this hierarchy have fewer teaching responsibilities and more professional advisory functions. Staff Teachers are assisted by three levels of paraprofessionals: Academic Assistants who serve as instructional aides; Educational Technicians who bring multi-media skills and talents to the teaching team; and Clerks who function in the same capacity as in the Trump plan. The major areas of responsibility delineated in the Allen plan are instructional management, curriculum construction and the application of research to the improvement of instruction.

Which of these two designs proves to be the more successful will be determined in the laboratory of time and experience. Undoubtedly, the most significant fact about both approaches is that they are widely criticized by those who feel that the status of the professional teacher is jeopardized by the introduction of paraprofessional personnel. The Allen plan is criticized as a subtle merit pay proposal, although under most merit pay plans, teachers have the same responsibility but get different compensation. The Allen-Temple City plan defines <u>differentiated</u> functions for teachers, and the salary scale is based on these divergent responsibilities. The Trump plan attempts to avoid the merit pay pitfall by emphasizing a peer relationship among teachers who exercise a differentiated responsibility.

Every experimental design has its measure of success and failure. Since there has been so little systematic implementation of differentiated staffing, however, at this stage of development, it is much more valid to speak of pitfalls and rewards. There are certainly several significant rewards flowing from such a staffing concept:

1. A differentiated staff encourages innovation. Teachers are not isolated in their attempts to introduce new content and new methods. When responsibilities are differentiated, the management of change is more systematic and therefore less traumatic.

2. Curriculum organization and improvement is facilitated. Team planning establishes context for the diverse educational interests and insights of the staff and provides fertile ground for the mutual consideration of student performance objectives, con-

tinuous progress sequencing and team evaluation.

3. The professionalization of teaching is solidly advanced. Staff differentiation provides abundant opportunities for leadership and followership. There is opportunity for peer-group recognition and individual study opportunities in depth. Teacher planning time is available during the school day through schedule modification and there are many in-service education possibilities. There is also opportunity for teacher specialization as well as expansion of broad knowledge in related fields. In addition, the supervisory roles of teachers and administrators are enhanced and teachers and students both have opportunity for variety during the entire school day.

4. Individualization of instruction is promoted because staff differentiation makes possible a non-graded structure in the school, with continuous progress and individual diagnosis, prescription and evaluation of student needs and goals.

There are, of course, a number of pitfalls. The major disadvantages tend to arise from the attitudes of staff members.

1. Differentiated staffing patterns require changes in role behavior on the part of administrators and teachers. These role changes presume and require adequate if not excellent communication between levels and an understanding of the differentiated role and a strong desire on the part of all involved to implement it. Obstacles arising in this area include a failure to communicate clearly, freely and openly and the danger that a lack of attention will be paid to details and follow-up activities. There is the possibility that teachers may not utilize their time well. There is also the danger of a prima donna emerging whose main concern is to advance his or her ideas and to monopolize meeting time. There is, of course, the possibility that some teachers may not be open enough to survive evaluation arising from close professional contact.

2. We must be concerned that differentiated staffing does not become an end rather than a means to an end. Proper staff utilization means that teacher specialists can be made available to students with varying interests and aptitudes. The aim of this process is the greater individualization of instruction and the more efficient

motivation of student learning. The structure is not so important as the way the structure functions.

3. A final pitfall is the risk that differentiated staffing may evolve a more rigid hierarchy than the one that now exists in schools with self-contained classrooms. A system is only as valuable as its flexibility and level of performance. We will have to focus strongly on the fact that the primary purpose of the differentiated staff is to provide specialization within a flexible framework.

Differentiated staffing structures are not yet a reality in many of our schools. There are, of course, notable examples in the Temple City project, in the various Trump schools of the Staff Utilization Project and the current Model Schools Project. There are also schools utilizing systematic team techniques to implement individually prescribed instruction and computer assisted instruction. The returns are far from complete and the outcome is by no means determined. Many of the problems of staff utilization have resulted from an unhappy mix of teachers and administrators who could not work well together. Those schools that have experienced even a modicum of success have worked systematically to develop good horizontal and vertical communication among staff members and to enhance leadership by employing modern management techniques.

Experience forces me to conclude that schools will not be successful in implementing differentiated staffing unless they take seriously McGregor's distinction between adversary and participative modes of leadership. The rapid changes in our modern world, the greater sophistication of both adults and young people and the long and developing tradition of a democratic style of life have tended to make obsolete the authoritarian style of leadership in many areas of American life. A successful differentiated staff may well depend upon a principal and an administrative staff that can use participatory modes of management in the identification and achievement of goals. When an <u>administrative staff</u> can work together as a team of professionals to achieve a sense of mutual confidence from goals and tasks determined by consensus, then <u>teaching teams</u> also may be able to see the value of a truly democratic form of team planning. Innovations are successful only when they are understood and imple-

mented on the grass-roots level. Students will not begin to reap the rewards of appropriate staff utilization until teachers acting in educational teams are able to define goals, diagnose the needs of each individual student, prescribe appropriate curriculum materials and evaluate student progress in the light of these mutually defined objectives. Perhaps differentiated staffing will be totally unworkable in an authoritarian environment; it will certainly be less successful. It will thrive only when our administrative and staffing structures have achieved a competent systems approach based on contemporary management design and a clear definition of mutual goals.